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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON IRAQ, MIDDLE EAST

Summary

-- A lead story in all papers today, November 5, focuses on the continued resistance in Iraq, with reports of five explosions in Baghdad as the resistance bombarded Bremer's headquarters for the second day, injuring four U.S. soldiers. Al-Dustour quoted Bush as having admitted that Saddam is responsible for the attacks and reported that Spain decided to temporarily withdraw its diplomats from Baghdad. All papers reported that Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmad Qurei is expected to present his new government to the Palestinian National Council next week. Meanwhile, Israeli Prime Minister Sharon reportedly failed to change Russia's stand on the road map. Al-Rai reported that Saudi authorities aborted an attack by Al Qaeda that targeted Umrah pilgrims in Makkah.

On the domestic front, Prime Minister Faisal Al-Fayez yesterday met with representatives of the Jordan Press Association and the Higher Media Council. During the meeting, Al-Fayez noted that the Jordanian media is strong but needs further development. In another report, Government Spokesperson Asma Khader announced that 25 Jordanian detainees in Israel will soon be released.

Editorial Commentary on Iraq

-- "The Iraqi Resistance With and Without Saddam!"

Daily columnist Bader Wardam writes on the op-ed page of center-left, influential Arabic daily Al-Dustour (11/05): "Despite their statements, which reflect a true stupidity in dealing with Iraq, the Americans know how scared the Iraqis are from Saddam and so, continuing to pump the idea that Saddam is leading the resistance means that the Iraqis will continue to stay away from it. Moreover, a reward for the arrest or liquidation of Saddam will only materialize when the U.S. occupation gains full control over Iraqi resources in the interest of U.S. companies. . . Only then will the legend of Saddam will totally be dispensed with just like it was created in the first place."

Wardam adds: "Saddam's disappearance means the spread of the Iraqi resistance within the social and political structure in Iraq, in which everyone will devote their time for the U.S. resistance and at last forget about the terror and fear that dwells inside them. Every patriotic Iraqi, i.e. every non Baathist and non agent for the U.S. occupation, will be able to take part in the comprehensive Iraqi resistance against the U.S. occupation, which will actually be a true resistance that only targets the U.S. army rather than international organizations and Iraqi civilians."

Wardam concludes: "Saddam's disappearance means the departure of the Arab mentality from the illusions and the legend and its entrance into the world of truth and knowledge of the correct details behind the lies that are disseminated by media organs and politicians in the United States - lies that are believed by the Arabs who seek the illusion of heroism and the legend of the fighting brave leader. The legend of Saddam is like the legend of Osama Bin Laden - a mere morphine injection in the Arab mind and is a dispersion of true Arab efforts to resist U.S. supremacy and occupation of the region politically and culturally. The sooner those legends disappear the better it will be for the future of the Arabs and Iraq, in particular."

Editorial Commentary on the Middle East

-- "The European Public Opinion and Israel: Peace and Anti-Semitism in a Poll"

Commenting on the European public opinion poll, semi-official, influential Arabic daily Al-Rai (11/05) editorializes: "The results of the European poll are a clear indication that the free world condemns and denounces what the Government of Israel is committing in terms capital punishment and killings, the construction of dividing walls, racial segregations, the toppling of the peace process, and closure of any political door that leads to resolving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. It is time for the leaders of Israel to review the files again instead of resorting to broken records and exhausted accusations that describe the world and public opinion as Anti-Semitic." GNEHM